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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe ..... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/62/36, A/62/369 and A/62/464)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/62/183, A/62/207, A/62/212, A/62/214, A/62/218, A/62/222, A/62/225, A/62/227, A/62/254, A/62/255, A/62/265, A/62/280, A/62/286, A/62/287, A/62/288, A/62/289, A/62/293, A/62/298, A/62/304, A/62/317 and A/C.3/62/3)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/62/213, A/62/223, A/62/263, A/62/264, A/62/275, A/62/313, A/62/318, A/62/354, A/62/498 and A/C.3/62/4)

(e) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*continued*) (A/62/230)

1. **Mr. Murata** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO) said that, to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provided an ideal opportunity for the United Nations system to demonstrate its commitment to those rights, it had been proposed that the United Nations should launch a one-year system-wide information campaign on the occasion of International Human Rights Day in order to raise awareness about the aspects of fundamental rights that were most pertinent to the work of United Nations agencies and to emphasize the importance of dignity and justice for all.

2. Having unanimously adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security in 2004, FAO had established the Right to Food Unit which was responsible for assisting countries with the implementation of the Guidelines, developing working methodologies and tools for those countries, providing them with information and building their capacities, and ensuring that the right to food was systematically integrated into its own work. FAO was currently working with some 10 countries to integrate the right to food into their legislation, policies, strategies and programmes. It encouraged all States to acquaint themselves with and to disseminate the Guidelines. Moreover, following the Guidelines was the best way of implementing the right to food.

3. In 2007, FAO had made "the right to food" the theme for World Food Day in recognition of the important role of human rights in the eradication of poverty and hunger. That event had provided an opportunity to raise awareness about that fundamental human right, to search for ways to achieve it and to create partnerships to overcome the challenges ahead.

4. **Ms. Rovirosa** (Mexico), reaffirming her country's commitment to the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, welcomed the adoption on 13 December 2006 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, two instruments which would contribute to eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities and enable them to integrate into society. Mexico welcomed the fact that many countries had immediately acceded to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Her Government would deposit its instrument of ratification for those instruments very shortly.

5. She welcomed the efforts made by the United Nations to promote and disseminate the Convention and the Protocol, to progressively implement the standards and guidelines relating to accessibility within its facilities, and to foster the participation of disabled persons' organizations in the work of its human rights bodies. During the current session, New Zealand, Sweden and Mexico would co-sponsor a draft resolution aimed at promoting the swift entry into force of the Convention and its Protocol. It would then be necessary to disseminate and implement the two instruments in collaboration with national institutions as well as civil society organizations, which had played a constructive role in the elaboration of the Convention.

6. Referring to the protection of the human rights of migrants, she stressed the full importance of that issue for her country, which was modernizing its migrant detention centres and bringing its legislation into line with international standards and which had invited the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants to conduct a follow-up visit to its territory. Mexico believed that the human rights of migrants should be at the heart of the work of bodies dealing with the issue of migration, including the forthcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development. It urged

those States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and invited those that had signed and ratified the Convention to collaborate on that issue with the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

7. Mexico was making a concerted effort to eliminate torture. Following national consultations, her Government had instructed the National Human Rights Commission to serve as a national mechanism for the prevention of torture, in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Government had also taken steps to provide training to the staff of federal centres for social rehabilitation and human rights commissions of different Mexican states in order to ensure that they were informed about the Optional Protocol and the procedures laid down by the Federal Attorney-General's Office in its directive No. A/057/2003 regarding medical and psychological analysis in connection with alleged acts of torture or ill treatment.

8. In conclusion, welcoming the report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/62/263) and the report of the Secretary-General on protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/62/298), she said that Mexico intended to introduce a new initiative on that question

9. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation resolutely rejected the allegations made during the preceding meeting by the representative of the United States, which were groundless. It was preposterous for the United States to accuse other countries of violating human rights when it continued to kill innocent people and establish secret prisons where it practised torture. The allegations made by the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were a mockery of the international community and an insult to human rights. The United States should stop stigmatizing countries that were not obedient to it and clean its own untidy house.

10. Canada had no business, either, pretending to be a human rights judge when it supported and encouraged the actions of so-called non-governmental organizations which abducted nationals of his country and incited riots on its territory. He appealed to Canada to address the situation of its indigenous people, who lived under regrettable conditions with respect to education, health care, access to employment and social welfare, instead of trying to find fault with other countries.

11. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by the representative of the United States during the meeting that morning had been yet another extremist sermon which had divided the sovereign world into two categories, "good guys" and "bad guys", and had established a single criterion for determining whether Member States of the United Nations fell into one or the other category and whether they did or did not respect human rights. Such a statement was out of place, given that, only a few days earlier, 184 States had voted against the illegal embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba, the only exception being Israel, and also given that millions of people in the United States had recently marched in the streets to condemn the occupation of Iraq and the murder of civilians and the excesses of private United States security firms in that country. Such arrogance was all the more out of place considering that: the United States was violating human rights in Guantanamo and in its "flying prisons" and other secret detention centres; according to the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/62/265), Israel and the United States engaged in "targeted killings"; and trials by United States courts martial of those who violated civil rights in Iraq and Afghanistan always ended with the defendants being absolved instead of penalized.

12. The United States clearly used human rights for political ends, and the extremists and fundamentalists within its Government promoted the myth of the clash of civilizations, of cultures and of religions, misrepresenting Islam and Muslims and fabricating illusory enemies solely for propaganda purposes. The world could only reject their so-called principles. Alluding to the statement made by the representative of Canada during the morning meeting, he said that Canada would do well to steer clear of the example set by the United States.

13. **Mr. Shinyo** (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation rejected the

allegation made during the previous meeting by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, according to which the Japanese Government was repressing nationals and associations of that country. The measures taken by his Government were strictly in accordance with national laws and without discrimination. Legal action was taken against people and entities in Japan only if they broke the law, which was precisely what had occurred in the case of the persons and association to which the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had alluded. The Japanese police had had a valid search warrant when they conducted a search of the premises of an association of Korean residents in April 2007. They had made no threats during the search, and the measures taken subsequently against the association in question had been aimed at recovering part of a debt that it owed.

14. In conclusion, he hoped that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would refrain from making false allegations in order to divert the attention of the international community. Japan was ready to negotiate with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to settle various issues, including the matter of abductions, nuclear and missile issues and the disputes arising from past events, in order thus to normalize relations between the two countries.

15. **Mr. Ke** Yousheng (China), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that during the morning meeting, the representative of the United States had once again accused several countries, including China, of failing to protect human rights adequately. His statement had been based on clichés and groundless accusations. Quick to denounce what was happening in other countries, the representative seemed to have forgotten what was happening in his own country, and in Iraq and Afghanistan. The killing of 17 innocent Iraqi civilians by employees of the Blackwater company was yet another illustration of the collateral damage of United States armed and security force actions. Under the pretext of counter-terrorism, the Government of the United States had not hesitated to infringe the right to privacy and freedom of opinion and expression, notably by tightening its control over the Internet. Moreover, racism and xenophobia were rampant in the United States, as was evidenced by the plethora of human rights violations among Amerindians and other minority ethnic groups. He hoped that the representative of the United States would remember all that before setting himself up as a human rights judge, and that he would wake up to the hypocrisy of his country with respect to human rights.

16. With regard to the statement made by the representative of Canada during the morning meeting, his singling out of several developing countries for criticism, China among them, ran counter to the spirit of dialogue and cooperation promoted in General Assembly resolution 60/251. That was all the more regrettable given that the human rights situation in Canada was far from satisfactory and that the representative had failed to mention the acts of Canada's allies. With regard to the Olympic Games, to which the Canadian representative had referred, China was opposed to any attempt to link the Games to political considerations.

17. In their efforts to promote and protect human rights, Member States should prefer dialogue and cooperation over confrontation, respect over arrogance and insolence, and sincerity over hypocrisy.

18. **Ms. Gendi** (Egypt), speaking in exercise of the right of reply with regard to the statement by the representative of Canada, said that Egypt was a country with institutions and with a strong judiciary and legal system, a country that respected human rights and did not practise discrimination against any ethnic minority or other group. The same could not be said of Canada, where acts against migrants and indigenous peoples had been denounced in the reports of several special procedures mandate holders. Egypt was also a country that played a constructive role within the United Nations system, something else that could not be said of Canada, which had been the sole country to vote against the Human Rights Council institution-building package simply because it included an item concerning the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories. She wondered how a country could portray itself as a defender of human rights when it refused to denounce certain situations and defended flagrant violations.

19. She would therefore recommend that Canada re-examine its policies on human rights in its own territory and at the international level before sitting in judgement of other countries.

20. **Mr. Schlosser** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he was surprised that Kuwait would be concerned about the Palestinians in

the territories, since Palestinians had been persecuted in Kuwait shortly after the first Gulf war. He was also surprised that the observer for Palestine continued to blame Israel solely for a situation that both parties would like to change. Israel had recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination many years earlier, but the Palestinians had yet to recognize Israel's right to live in peace and security. Under the international agreements signed between the two parties, the Palestinians had not only rights but also responsibilities, the first and foremost of which was to denounce terror and stop the violence. Regrettably, despite Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip, the threat of suicide bombings in the territories continued, and Qassam rockets were still being launched from Gaza on a daily basis, targeting Israeli civilians and their property. The Palestinian Authority did nothing to stop them. That was all the more regrettable given that the real cause for the deterioration of the situation in Gaza was the takeover by Hamas terrorists in June 2007 and the ongoing internal fighting, to which the observer for Palestinian had turned a blind eye. Israel had a duty to defend its citizens, and it did so with due respect for international humanitarian standards and human rights. His Government hoped that the current talks and the forthcoming meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President would lead soon to the achievement of peace for the benefit of the two peoples.

21. **Mr. Aksen** (Turkey), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, objected strenuously to the assertion by the Greek delegation that the problem of Cyprus went back to 1974, whereas United Nations peacekeeping forces had been present on the island since 1964. The Greek delegation was careful not to say that since 1963 the Greek Cypriots had pursued a policy of intimidation, forced expulsions and ethnic cleansing, in particular by pushing the Turkish Cypriot leaders out of the Government and by forcing 180,000 Turkish Cypriots to take refuge in enclaves that represented only three per cent of the island's territory. He recalled that his country had intervened militarily only 11 years later, in 1974, for the sole purpose of re-establishing peace after a military coup d'état engineered by Greece and saving the Turkish Cypriots from being wiped out altogether. The Cyprus problem was therefore the consequence of 20 years of provocations on the part of Greece, which wanted at all costs to annex the Turkish part of Cyprus. In 2004 the Turkish Cypriots had voted in favour of the Annan Plan for it had seemed to them to offer a solution, but the upshot was that they continued to live in the total isolation imposed upon them by the Greek Cypriot party. More than ever open to dialogue, Turkey encouraged the two parties to reach a just and lasting settlement of their conflict, in accordance with Security Council recommendations, but observed that for that to happen, the Greek Cypriot party would have to be ready to cooperate. The latter's rejection of the Annan Plan raised serious doubts in that connection.

22. **Ms. Nawaz** (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that she had been outraged when she had heard Switzerland lecture other countries at a meeting the previous day on respect for the right to life, when barely two weeks earlier, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had expressed concern over draconian legislation proposed by the Swiss People's Party that harked back to Nazi laws. The electoral campaign of that extreme right-wing party, which had put out a poster with a heavily racist message, was flagrant evidence of a rebirth of racism and xenophobia in one of the oldest democracies in the world, all the more shocking because the poster in question had been published in the newspapers and sent by mail to voters' homes and because it had been produced by a political party with the majority in Parliament that was a member of the coalition Government. Pakistan considered it regrettable that a country that was host to so many international bodies did not set a better example.

23. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he was disappointed at the lack of cooperation and mutual respect in the Committee's debates, and thus deplored that Canada had chosen, in line with the United States and the European Union, to interpret human rights in terms of its own unipolar vision of the world and its own interests. It should be recalled that the human rights situation in Canada was far from rosy, that racism and xenophobia were steadily growing and that the rights of migrants were consistently trampled. The indigenous Canadian peoples continued to lead a precarious existence, because they could not exploit the ancestral lands that the Government refused to restore to them, and they were up against the difficult choice of assimilation or marginalization. Underrepresented in the working population and overrepresented in the prisons, condemned to a miserable existence, they

were, besides that, victims of police violence committed with total impunity. Furthermore, in the name of anti-terrorism, the Canadian Government continued to restrict the civil and cultural rights of other minorities. The countries of the North must stop their unjustified lecturing of the countries of the South where human rights were concerned, and a genuine intercultural dialogue should be instituted.

24. **Mr. Pham Hai Anh** (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, denied Canada's allegations at the previous meeting that certain human rights defenders, which its delegation had not identified in any way, were being harassed and arbitrarily imprisoned in his country. Viet Nam, believing that the exercise of human rights could be promoted only by dialogue and cooperation, was working with other countries to defend their mutual interests in that regard and practised neither harassment nor arbitrary detention of its own nationals. All its citizens were equal before the law and the Government applied clearly defined legal procedures to punish those who broke the law, regardless of how their acts might be qualified by other countries.

25. **Ms. Grabianowska** (Poland), taking exception to the statement made the previous day, 30 October, by Singapore, said that the current debate on the death penalty in Poland should be seen only as an illustration of freedom of expression. Capital punishment did not exist in her country and neither the Government nor any of the main political parties had the intention of changing that state of affairs in any way. Poland, moreover, was a sponsor of the draft resolution against the death penalty, in keeping with the position of the European Union, of which it was a member.

26. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it was unfortunate that the representative of Israel tried to justify the massive human rights violations his Government was committing, by using dishonest arguments whose only aim was to allow Israel to shirk its legal and moral obligations and absolve itself of any responsibility for its actions. It was high time for Israel to recognize the 60 years of occupation, put an end to it and make reparation for the damage caused to millions of refugees who were still waiting to be able to return to their homes. Palestine, despite the limited means at its disposal — still further reduced in recent years by the occupying Power's systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure — had spared no effort in fulfilling its international obligations. It had condemned all illegal acts of violence, regardless of the perpetrators. The anti-terrorism that was Israel's pretext in no way justified the suffering of the Palestinian people. Palestine supported all the recommendations and conclusions in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and hoped that Israel would do the same.

27. **Mr. Stavrou** (Cyprus), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it was regrettable, that year after year, Turkey brought up the same tendentious accusations against Cyprus, for the sole purpose of distracting attention from its own responsibility in the situation on the island. If Cyprus was still partitioned, it was because the Turkish army continued to occupy a large part of that independent country, a member of the United Nations and of the European Union, in defiance of Security Council resolutions and the European Court of Justice ruling. The question of Cyprus could not be settled as long as Turkey did not withdraw its troops from the island and allow the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to live side by side in peace.

28. **Mr. Normandin** (Canada), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to several delegations, said that Canada itself recognized that its human rights situation was not ideal and that the work of the human rights defenders was helping the Government to redress the shortcomings. Canada had spoken simply as a member country because it thought it necessary to speak of human rights in a specific, not abstract, way, in keeping with the rules of an open, frank and courteous dialogue.

29. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking again in exercise of the right of reply to the representative of Japan, said that the sanctions imposed on his country's nationals and their associations was a result of the Japanese Government's deliberate intention to put an end to activities by associations of nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Japanese attitude was not at all surprising if one considered that for over 50 years it had been denying the crimes against humanity that it had committed, especially by providing "comfort women" for its soldiers for more than 50 years. The Japanese delegation should realize that any attempt by his country to conceal its actions would be in vain and would in no way help it to take on greater responsibilities within the international community.

30. **Mr. Shinyo** (Japan), speaking again in exercise of the right of reply to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, observed that the nationals and the associations in question had broken Japanese law and owed a great deal of money to the Japanese treasury. They had therefore not been subjected to any discrimination. Furthermore, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the last one who should be dredging up events from the past, when his country had once kidnapped 17 Japanese persons, and the whereabouts of 12 of them were still unknown. He therefore called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to honour its human rights obligations and refrain from any further violations in its own territory and abroad.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.